

Basil I. Gooden, Ph.D.
Biographical Information

In May 2014, President Obama appointed Dr. Basil I. Gooden to serve as the State Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Rural Development for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Basil brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in addressing housing, community and economic development issues in rural Virginia.

Basil's primary educational and professional background is in the areas of housing, community and economic development, family financial management and consumer-related issues. He has worked to improve the quality of living for people and communities by addressing issues related to family financial management, inter-generational wealth development and wealth retention strategies. He works with national experts in housing and economic development to advance wealth building strategies within limited-resource and socially-disadvantaged populations.

Prior to joining USDA – Rural Development, Basil served as the Chief Deputy Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for twelve years. His primary administrative responsibilities included strategic management, technology advancement, and community development initiatives in economically distressed communities. Before DHCD, Basil worked at Virginia Tech where he served as the Coordinator of Outreach and Community Relations. Additionally, Basil worked with Virginia Cooperative Extension as an Extension Specialist where he designed and implemented a statewide research project to assess community issues impacting localities across Virginia. Some of his previous professional experiences include working as a Legislative Assistant to a former U.S. Congressman from the Fifth Congressional District of Virginia and a Legislative Aide to a former U.S. Senator from Virginia. He is an active board member of several statewide organizations such as the Council for Rural Virginia, Housing Virginia, EarthCraft Virginia, Preservation Virginia, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension State Extension Leadership Council. He previously served as an Advisor on the Buckingham/Cumberland County FSA County Committee.

Basil is a native of Buckingham County, Virginia where he and his family own and operate a cattle farm, raising Black Angus beef. His family farm also participates in tree farming and land conservation efforts. As a youth, Basil was actively involved in many Virginia Cooperative Extension related activities that focused on crop production, livestock and 4-H activities.

Basil graduated from Buckingham County High School and attended Virginia Tech where he received a B.A. in Political Science. He earned a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from Syracuse University in 1995. Additionally, he is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where he received a Master of Public Health (MPH) and a Ph.D. in 1998.

Basil currently resides in Henrico County with his wife, Dr. Susan T. Gooden, who is a professor of public policy at the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University. They have one daughter, Caper, who is currently a student at the College of William and Mary.